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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, February 12, 1932

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "A Valentine Dinner for Sunday." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A. Information on plumbing from the Bureau of Public Roads, U.S.D.A.

Bulletins available: "Simple Plumbing Repairs in the Home," and "Farm Plumbing."

When I've finished with the program for today, I'm going to cease thinking about parties and company dinners and bridge refreshments for some time. I'm going to have a rest from planning things for hostesses. The way I've been going on, anyone would think I was a society belle with nothing in my head but froth and frivolity. Whereas I know perfectly well that it's as the poet says --life is real, life is earnest. Also I know that if I don't get after the top shelves and the drawers in my kitchen pantry, somebody is going to come in some day, raise an eyebrow or two and say, "Aunt Sanny really isn't the housekeeper she might be."

But here's a patriotic Friday with a St. Valentine Sunday following. And here's a letter from a bride in Chicago who is having a party Saturday night and another from a lady in Seattle who's going to have some guests in on Sunday. So I guess I'd better do my best by these people before I go to cleaning the kitchen shelves or starting on any other real and earnest things in life.

The bride in Chicago is planning to serve a fruit salad. And she'd like to get it all ready several hours ahead of time. But she's afraid the apples and bananas will turn brown on standing.

Apples, peaches, pears, bananas and some other fruits do turn brown if they are peeled, cut up and just left to stand. But there are three ways to prevent this discoloring.

After the fruits have been peeled but not sectioned, you can place them in cold water to which salt or vinegar has been added. Just before serving, you can dry the fruit and cut it up.

One method is to use lemon juice. Squeeze the juice over the fruit. Some people rub it on the apples. But, of course, lemon juice may make your

salad to tart. You have to consider that.

Still another method is to drop the pieces of fruit directly into the salad dressing as soon as they are cut up. Take a portion of the dressing, add extra acid -- preferably lemon juice, then cut the apples up and drop them directly into the dressing. Be sure they are entirely covered.

Of course, if your salad mixture contains oranges or grape fruit, you'll have sufficient acid to prevent the other fruits from darkening.

White grapes and bright red cherries are attractive for salads, especially at this time of year. Cherries are the motif for any Washington's birthday refreshments, just as hearts are the motif for St. Valentine's day.

Which brings me to today's menu-- a Sunday dinner, for the fourteenth of February.

I expect that this day suggests to you the same sort of thing it does to me--frills and dainties, hearts and cupids, lace and such delicate colors as pink and white. If any day of the year is meant for frills, this one is. For a valentine meal all these things may be played up in the menu. Your color scheme can be pink and white. And you can use the heart shape in many different courses. For example, patty shells to hold some creamed food in the main course might be baked in heart-shaped pans. Or you might have heart shaped molds for your gelatin salad. For dessert, delicate pink ice cream, also heart shaped, and served on a lace paper doily. Cakes or wafers in the shape of hearts can go with it. And valentine candies.

So for this valentine dinner let's have a first course of chicken a la king on toast or in patty shells--and remember about the hearts here. Then new or canned peas in a mashed potato nest; Crisp radish roses; Tiny hot rolls or biscuits; Individual heart molds of gelatin fruit salad with mayonnaise dressing tinted with currant jelly and, for dessert, Peppermint ice cream with heart shaped cakes or white cookies.

Did you get all that? I'll repeat it just to be sure. And, by the way, if you're not in need of a valentine menu this year, why not jot this down in your notebook anyway so you'll have it ready for next year?

Chicken a la king on toast or in heart-shaped patty shells; Peas in a mashed potato nest; Radish roses; Tiny hot rolls or biscuits; Gelatin fruit salad with dressing; and, for dessert, Peppermint ice cream; Heart-shaped white cakes or cookies; Coffee.

Let's see. What ought we to talk over a bit about that menu? Of course, you know how to make the radish roses, don't you? Wash the radishes, cut off the long tails but leave a bit of green at the stem end. Then slice the red skin back in four sections, leaving a white center for the flower. Crisp these radishes in ice water.

The salad? The Menu Specialist suggest a gelatin base tinted perhaps with a little red fruit juice or coloring. In it mold sliced bananas, grapefruit sections and pieces of pineapple. Then the currant jelly salad dressing to go with it. Here's how you make that:

2-12-32

Dilute thick mayonnaise with a little cream and beat in tart, red currant jelly that has been pressed through a sieve. The jelly gives a nice flavor and a delicate pink color.

And for dessert, peppermint ice cream, you'll find the recipe for it in your green radio cookbook.

Just time to answer one question that came in on the morning mail. A new housekeeper wants to know what causes the drain in the kitchen sink to become stopped up and how to remedy it without calling a plumber.

The trouble probably comes from stoppage of the waste trap under the sink. This trap is likely to accumulate the grease from cooking and dishwashing which hardens in the pipe. Bits of food also may be caught there and if they are not removed may interfere with the flow of water and create an unpleasant odor.

There's a very valuable household tool known as the plumber's friend. I hope you own one. It is a rubber cap fastened on a wooden handle. When the sink becomes clogged, get out the plumber's friend. With the sink partly filled with water, place the open end of the cup over the waste outlet and work it violently up and down. The pressure this creates is usually sufficient to clear the trap. If not, unscrew the plug in the under side of the trap and remove the obstruction with a wire. Of course, you won't take the plug out without first setting a pail beneath the opening.

Monday, that's our economy day, isn't it? Shall we have a chat on cleaning and pressing at home? One of the best ways I know to make clothes last long and look well is to keep them clean and in order.

